



Dear Food Safety Expert

What are some of the advantages and benefits of e-learning? I find more and more of my colleagues are talking about it.

With the explosion of web-based technology two decades ago, training visionaries readily embraced the enormous promise and limitless possibilities of e-learning. Through the realization of that promise, scores of food companies are now harnessing the power of e-learning to meet their employee training and compliance initiatives.

E-learning is the presentation of content via the Internet or through an intranet with a focus on changing behaviour, not merely delivering information.

The web technology allows for interactivity, embedded learner assessments and immediate learner feedback. Instruction on the web can be updated in one location (the server) and then be instantly seen by all learners. E-learning is an extremely powerful tool in any training program and offers a number of advantages, including:

- **Consistency.** Each time a web-based class is delivered, the class has the same instruction presented in the same manner with the same examples. Each employee on first, second or third shift receives the same quality instruction.
- **Availability.** Companies can provide training to employees on all shifts easily. An employee on any shift can begin his or her training as soon as a computer terminal is available. Critical information is delivered to new employees as soon as they start as opposed to waiting for the next scheduled orientation seminar. In addition, refresher training is not constrained by classroom space or instructor availability.
- **Learning effectiveness.** E-learning allows employees to learn at their own pace. Employees can repeat an online instructional course as many times as they desire. They

can proceed through the information at a rate that is comfortable for them.

- **Documentation and assessment.** Online learning allows companies to track the progress of employees and measure the impact of its training initiatives.

Training experts recommend a “blended learning” approach, combining e-learning with more traditional teaching techniques, such as classroom instruction and instructor led training, to address the learning needs of trainees.

Growing numbers of universities and private companies offer online programs in the food industry. Recently, Silliker Inc. and EduNeering, a world leader in online quality and compliance knowledge management solutions, formed a strategic partnership to help management control risks associated with food safety by increasing employee job performance and proficiency. This integrated learning solution for food safety and quality combines the food industry experience of Silliker with EduNeering’s expertise in delivering online knowledge systems.

Common food safety challenges, such as HACCP, employee hygiene, microbial cross-contamination, food allergens and sanitation are among the core topics that are being introduced under the Silliker-EduNeering accord.

In the highly challenging and regulated food industry a blended learning approach provides companies, especially those with multiple locations, with the ability to deliver consistent information and education programs to multiple levels of employees.

C.J. Reynolds is director of education services for Silliker Inc. For more information on e-learning, contact the Silliker Markham laboratory at (905) 479-5255 or corporate headquarters at (708) 957-7878.

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